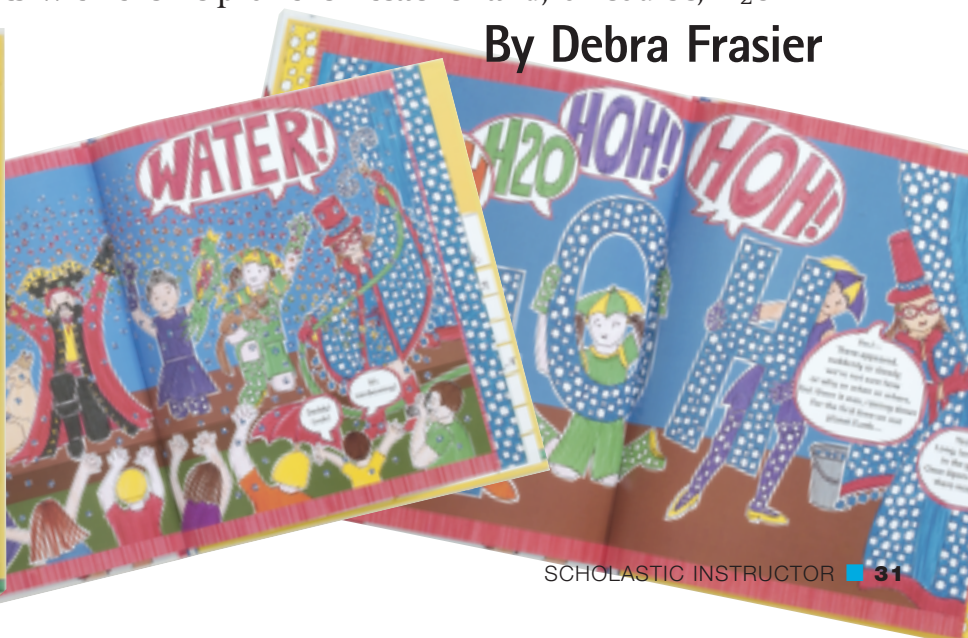
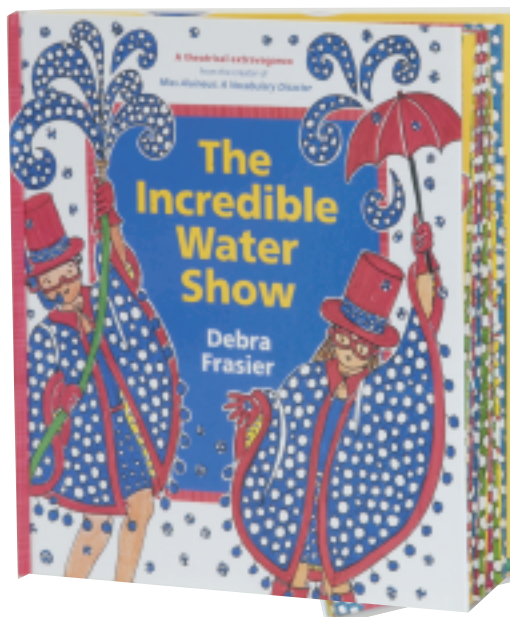


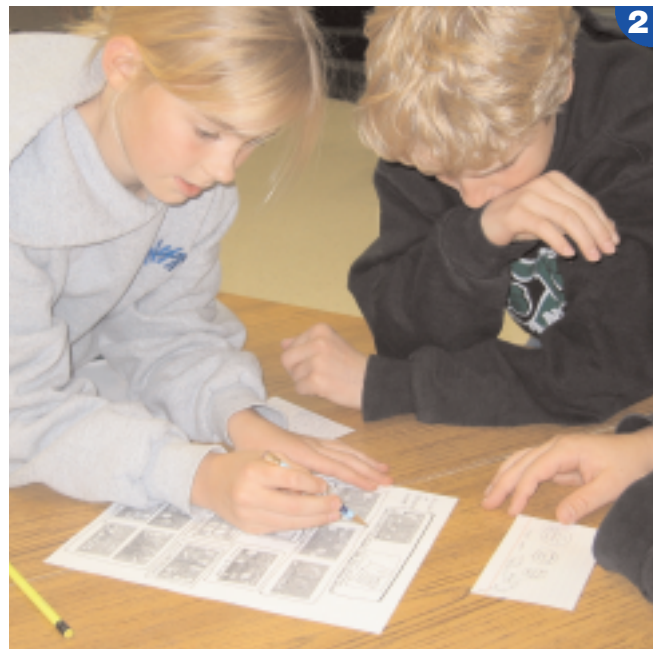
STAGE A Water Show

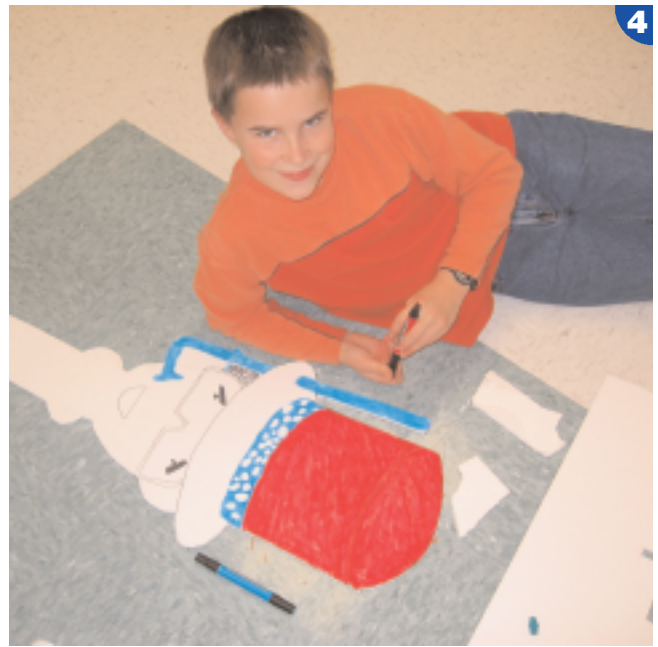


In my new book, *The Incredible Water Show*, the characters from *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster* use an ocean of information to stage an inventive performance about the water cycle. Here's how I turned the story into hands-on science learning for real-life fifth-grade students with the help of their teacher and, of course, H₂O

By Debra Frasier




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Water-cycle knowledge increased with repeated

1. SOAKING IN THE STORY: To begin, Julie Reimer, my teacher partner at Snail Lake Elementary in Shoreview, Minnesota, read *The Incredible Water Show* to her fifth-grade students twice, asking them to hear it as listeners first, and then as performers.

3. IT'S RAINING BUCKETS: Julie and I invited students to gather objects to hold and pour water. We collected funnels, watering cans, turkey basters, hoses, buckets, and even eyedroppers. Students were able to select whatever prop would best tell their part of the water story.

2. PLANNING THE PLAY: We then broke the book into 11 scenes, each of which was assigned to a three-member team. We cut the book into single pages, laminating the scenes for easy study. Each team assigned its roles and students copied their lines onto note cards.

4. SETTING THE SCENE: For use as props, in addition to the water objects, students created large puppets out of poster boards and rods. For costumes, the children wore white lab coats from a local thrift store and umbrella hats we ordered from www.umbrellahats.com.



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readings, rehearsals, and performances!

5. REHEARSING “DRY”: There’s no getting around it—practicing a play can be chaotic! While some students worked on building props, others practiced throughout the classroom. We rehearsed without water until the final show. (A mop took care of the minimal cleanup.)

6. PUTTING IT TOGETHER: To create the backdrop shown here, we slit three large boxes along one seam, taped them together, folded them like a fan, and then covered them with tape to keep the cardboard dry. Smaller boxes served as wings on each side.

7. COMPLETING THE CYCLE: We altered the last scene to feature an entire crew of pirates, allowing everyone to take part in the finale, shown here as the students perform for younger children at Snail Lake. Our play was a great success as a collaborative learning experience and a lesson in science for both the participants and audience! If you’re interested in staging your own water show, you can go online to www.debrafrasier.com for more tips. ■

